Tri-County Meeting

Speech of Dr. Leland I. Doan at the organization meeting of the Tri-County Community College Study Committee, March 29, 1955.

I should like to make two things very clear right here in the beginning:

Point One -- I am deeply and seriously interested in the subject we are here to discuss.

Point Two -- is a qualification of Point One. I already have all of the educational responsibilities which I can accommodate and to which I can do justice. So I am here only because of my underlying interest and to lend a hand in getting this discussion started.

Before getting into the discussion proper, however, I would like to make a suggestion or two. I think it is very easy to come into a meeting like this with preconceived, or at least partially conceived, ideas -- with a certain amount of enthusiasm or antagonism.

It is also very easy for a conference like this to run off on all sorts of tangents only vaguely relevant to the primary objective. Since our time is not entirely unlimited I would like to suggest that we try to keep our primary objective clearly in sight and set up some mental boundaries of discussion.

I believe you all have copies of the agenda, and I would like to call your attention to the fact that the <u>first word</u> in that agenda is the word, "<u>exploratory</u>."

I for one am in no way committed to the idea of a tri-community college. And so far as I know, no one else here is either. If we were this meeting would be quite without purpose.

I am committed to the idea of exploring the subject to see if we can arrive at a preliminary estimate of whether such an institution is, or may soon be needed, and if so whether or not it may represent a logical solution to a problem.

As I see it, about all we actually know at this point is that the population of our tri-county area is growing steadily and that there is a definite trend toward more and more young people needing and seeking education beyond the high school level. So the demands of our youth for higher education are, as it were, increasing from two directions at the same time.

Since much the same thing is going on all over Michigan we can readily foresee that the day is not far off when the potential customers for higher education will be so numerous as to overburden Michigan's existing educational facilities.

Localized facilities may or may not be a logical answer to that problem. If they do prove to be a logical solution it may or may not prove most advantageous to attempt to provide them on a cooperative basis.

There is plenty of precedent for inter-community cooperation. I think we can look with a great deal of satisfaction upon the results of joint efforts in bringing about these air terminal facilities here, in improving our water supplies, in our integrated Civil Defense and disaster machinery. But for our purposes today these things mean only that there have been occasions when we found it both possible and advantageous to

work together. And we have accomplished in that way things which would have been difficult or impossible for any one of our communities to achieve alone.

When our research people up in Midland tackle a fresh problem they have to do it with an open mind. If they didn't they would probably come up with faster answers -- but they would be half answers, or only partially valid answers, which would ultimately prove of questionable value to our company. It is only when we get the best answer that we prosper best.

So it is my suggestion that we cast ourselves today not in the role of debaters but of researchers. We should be concerned primarily with establishing facts or devising means whereby they can be established. The debates undoubtedly will, and properly should, come after we have successfully established those facts.